

the
GREENWICH VILLAGE ORCHESTRA
BARBARA YAHR, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2018 | 2:30 PM | CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION



2017-2018 SEASON
ORCHESTRAL FANFARE

A NOTE FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The Greenwich Village Orchestra is on the move again - thanks for joining us for this exciting season at new venues while our regular venue at Washington Irving High School is undergoing renovation. We continue the season at the Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church with our very own Gerard Gordon and Andrew Pak in solo roles tonight, followed by a symphony that lets the full orchestra shine. As we enter our fourth decade, we are proud to continue to be your neighborhood orchestra. The GVO works hard and plays hard every week, but we really come alive when we perform for a live audience.

Yours,



Barbara Yahr

Music Director and Conductor

.....
Established in 1986, the GVO is a symphony orchestra composed entirely of volunteers. By day, we are accountants, artists, attorneys, carpenters, editors, physicians, professors, programmers, psychologists, retirees, scientists, secretaries, teachers, and writers. As musicians, we are dedicated to bringing the best possible performances of great music to our audiences and are committed to serving the community while keeping our ticket prices affordable.

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PROGRAM

Sunday, March 4, 2018 at 2:30 p.m.

Barbara Yahr, Music Director and Conductor

Matthew Lewis, organ

George Vosburgh, trumpet

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Concerto for Organ, Timpani, and Strings

Matthew Lewis, organ

Andante

Allegro giocoso

Subito andante moderato

Tempo allegro

Molto agitato

Très calme: Lent

Tempo de l'allegro initial

Tempo d'introduction: Largo

Johann Hummel (1778-1837)

Trumpet Concerto in E Major

George Vosburgh, trumpet

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Allegro molto

— Intermission —

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78

Adagio - Allegro moderato - Poco adagio

Allegro moderato - Presto - Maestoso - Allegro

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

POULENC - ORGAN CONCERTO

Poulenc the man had an experience in 1936 that had a profound influence on Poulenc the composer. The sudden death of his colleague Pierre-Octave Ferroud affected him intensely, and after a subsequent visit to Notre Dame de Rocamadour, Poulenc's dormant Catholicism was reawakened. Much of his work thereafter was liturgical in nature but even his secular works moved away from the irreverence of his youth toward greater depth and meaning.

The commission for the Organ Concerto actually came two years before this life-changing moment, but it was the new, more serious Poulenc who completed the piece in 1938. He was initially asked to create music that featured a small orchestra and an "easy" organ part that presumably could be played by the amateur commissioner, one Princess Edmond de Polignac. "Easy" was abandoned, however, during the four years it took to finish the piece — another likely indication of Poulenc's personal transformation.

His correspondence during this time alludes to this inner journey and the resultant musical renewal by stating, "This is not the amusing Poulenc of the Concerto for Two Pianos, but more like a Poulenc en route to the cloister..." Music was his idea of a self portrait, and (despite the above comment) the Concerto included bits of both the newly religious and older carefree versions of himself.

As a composer, Poulenc was not constrained by any prideful avoidance of imitation. In addition to his own melodic gifts, he was a highly imaginative synthesizer. Bach can be heard in the Organ Concerto. So can Mozart and maybe even a bit of the great Romantics. All of these sounds, the borrowed and the entirely new, enjoy fruition in the hands of a truly masterful architect and sincere artist.

It is the music of a man reborn, both guileless and spontaneous in its heartfelt directness. The Princess herself captures the total impact of the piece in her simple thank you note to Poulenc, written in exile during the war. "Its profound beauty haunts me."

— Jeff Counts

HUMMEL - TRUMPET CONCERTO

Like Haydn, Hummel wrote his Trumpet Concerto for Anton Weidinger, who gave the première on New Year's Day 1804 at the court of the Esterhazy family. Although the work dates almost from the Romantic era, it resembles more closely the style of Mozart – for example, the opening of the concerto is very similar to Mozart's "Haffner" Symphony, No. 35 in D.

The orchestration is also very modest, the only addition to the orchestra of Haydn being two clarinets. The result though is by far Hummel's best known work, and one of the most popular solo pieces for trumpet.

The first movement is skilfully constructed, with an energetic first and more playful second tune. It is in sonata form and concludes with the first tune repeated by the soloist. The brief second movement has some attractive woodwind solos. The Finale is a cheerful Rondo with considerable technical demands for the soloist, especially in the string of flourishes and trills after the central minor section. The work ends in triumph.

SAINT-SAËNS - SYMPHONY NO. 3

As with Beethoven's Ninth, the Third Symphony of Camille Saint-Saëns was commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society. Saint-Saëns conducted both its London premiere in 1886 and its French premiere in 1887. The structure of the work is in two movements, each broken into two sections, thereby maintaining a traditional four-movement symphonic structure. The symphony was greatly inspired by Saint-Saëns's friend, mentor and champion, Franz Liszt. Originally, Saint-Saëns had intended to dedicate the symphony to Liszt, but unfortunately Liszt died ten weeks after its premiere and never got to hear the work that he so affected and influenced. Since Liszt's death came before the work could be published, it instead bears the inscription, "À la mémoire de Franz Liszt."

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

At the work's premiere Saint-Saëns addressed the unique two-movement structure by including the following text in the program: "This Symphony, divided into two parts, nevertheless includes practically the traditional four movements: the first, checked in development, serves as an introduction to the Adagio, and the scherzo is connected after the same manner with the finale. The composer has thus sought to shun in a certain measure the interminable repetitions which are more and more disappearing from instrumental music."

As with works by Liszt, Hector Berlioz and César Franck, not to mention other works of Saint-Saëns's, the Third Symphony would be considered a "motto" symphony, one that is both cyclic in nature and grounds itself by way of thematic transfiguration. The motto is introduced and then transformed and revamped, with examples of it found throughout the symphony in various incarnations.

Like Liszt, Saint-Saëns was both a master pianist and organist, so it is no surprise that both instruments are featured heavily in his "Organ Symphony." The moniker is somewhat misleading, creating the impression that his symphony is either for organ or a concerto for organ. In actuality, the organ is only used in two of the four movements. The French title for the work, *Symphonie No. 3 "avec orgue"* (with organ), is a much more apropos way to describe the organ's role in the symphony. As a piano virtuoso, Saint-Saëns deftly writes for both two-hand and four-hand piano.

The symphony opens with a brief and somewhat haunting introduction which leads directly into the motto theme, first played by the strings. This theme integrates the beginning of the *Dies irae* chant, which has direct associations with both Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Liszt's *Totentanz*. The organ makes its first appearance in the Adagio, as mainly accompanimental to the winds and strings. A brief statement combining the motto theme and an *appoggiatura* figure from the introduction challenge the tranquility of the movement, but it ends peacefully and serenely with the organ and strings fading away into a gentle *morendo*.

The second "large" movement begins with a brief *Allegro moderato* using fragmented versions of the motto theme, leading into the *Presto* where Saint-Saëns uses brilliant scalar passages in the piano to accompany yet another transfiguration of the motto.

Both themes of the preceding Allegro moderato appear in the middle of the movement, followed by a passage of extreme chromaticism, more piano flourishes, a brief fanfare, and then surprisingly, a moment of repose and extreme lyricism. The uncharacteristic end of the Presto seems in part to make way for the grandeur of the opening organ chord in the ensuing Maestoso.

This is where Saint-Saëns also employs piano four-hands under the lyrical string melody. The final Allegro begins fugally and eventually returns to the cyclic nature of the symphony, transforming and repeating the motto theme until the climactic finish.

Though Saint-Saëns would live three and a half decades after his “Organ Symphony” premiered, he never again tried his hand at the genre. He stated, “With it I have given all I could give. What I did I could not achieve again.”

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

BARBARA YAHR

Now in her sixteenth season with the GVO, Music Director Barbara Yahr continues to lead the orchestra to new levels of distinction. With blockbuster programming and internationally renowned guest artists, the GVO under Barbara's baton, has grown into an innovative, collaborative institution offering a rich and varied season of classical music to our local community.

A native of New York, Ms. Yahr's career has spanned from the United States to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Her previous posts include Principal Guest Conductor of the Munich Radio Orchestra, Resident Staff Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony under Maestro Lorin Maazel and Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared as a guest conductor with such orchestras as the Bayerische Rundfunk, Dusseldorf Symphoniker, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Frankfurt Radio, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Janacek Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, and the National Symphony in Washington D.C. She has also conducted the orchestras in Columbus, Detroit, Calgary, Chattanooga, Louisiana, Richmond, New Mexico, Lubbock, and Anchorage, as well as the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, New World Symphony, and the Chautauqua Festival Symphony Orchestra. She has also appeared in Israel conducting in both Jerusalem and Eilat. As an opera conductor, she has led new productions in Frankfurt, Giessen, Tulsa, Cincinnati, Minnesota and at The Mannes School of Music in NYC. Most recently, she has coached the actors on the set of the Amazon Series, *Mozart in the Jungle*, and in October 2016, she conducted the season opener of the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra and led the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra musicians in a free concert of Dvorak and Mozart.

Ms. Yahr is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Middlebury College where she studied piano and philosophy. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Conducting from the Curtis Institute of Music where she studied with Max Rudolf and an MM in Music Theory from the Manhattan School of Music. She was a student of Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine.

A central focus of Ms. Yahr's career has been her commitment to finding new ways to reach a broader population with music. This path ultimately led her to pursuing an MA in Music Therapy at NYU and training at the Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy in NYC. Her pioneering, community music therapy project, Together in Music, brings orchestral music to the special needs community with uniquely interactive programs presented annually by the GVO.

Barbara is married to Dr. Alexander Lerman and has two adult step children, Abe and Dania, and a 15 year old son, Ben.



MATTHEW LEWIS

Matthew Lewis maintains an active career as organist, choral conductor and educator. He has been a member of the Organ Faculty of the Juilliard School Pre-College division since 1993, and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Organ at Westminster Choir College since 2006.

Dr. Lewis has presented solo organ recitals in the United States, Canada and France, and was a featured artist on WNYC, New York. As Organist and Director of Music at the Church of the Incarnation in Manhattan, Dr. Lewis directs a select group of professional singers in a variety of liturgical choral music.



Artistic Director and Conductor of St. George's Choral Society since 2004, he directs the 80-voice chorus in major works of the repertoire. At The Juilliard School, he completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree as a student of Jon Gillock. While earning the Master of Music degree, also at Juilliard, he was the winner of the organ competition, resulting in a performance of Barber's Toccata Festiva with the Juilliard Symphony in Alice Tully Hall.

He has performed the complete organ works of César Franck several times, including at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City.

Dr. Lewis is the former recipient of a Fulbright Grant and the Annette Kade Fellowship from the Council of International Education for study in Paris where he was a student of organ-virtuoso Marie-Madeleine Duruflé.

He continues studies in choral conducting with Robert Page.

GEORGE VOSBURGH



George Vosburgh, celebrated soloist and lecturer is internationally acclaimed for his virtuosity on the trumpet in recordings, concerts and recitals, as well as many guest artist performances in such locales as the Bonn Festival at Rolandsek, Germany, the Ravinia Festival, Chicago, and the Curs Internacional de Musica in Valencia, Spain. In 1992 he joined the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra as Principal Trumpet.

The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences awarded George Vosburgh a Grammy as Best New Classical Artist in 1985 for the Reference recording of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* with Chicago Pro Musica. He is a Bavarian Radio International Music Competition prize winner and a Gold and Platinum Record recipient for his work with the New Age music ensemble Mannheim Steamroller. In 2003 he was invited to become Principal Trumpet of the World Orchestra for Peace under the direction of Valery Gergiev. The orchestra has since performed on tour across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and produced many recordings

and television programs.

Recordings featuring George Vosburgh include *Trumpeter's Heritage*, music by Bach, Böhme, Tomasi, Fasch, and Neruda with the Czech Philharmonic and Arnie Roth conducting, *Trumpet Masterworks*, pieces for trumpet and piano with Alaine Fink, and *Four Trumpet Concerti*, works by Haydn, Hummel, Telemann, and Leopold Mozart with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and Gerard Schwarz conducting. Recordings are featured on the Four Winds label.

In 1994, Mr. Vosburgh organized the Pittsburgh Symphony Brass, a unique brass ensemble featuring some of the world's finest orchestral brass musicians in chamber ensemble. Since 1998, the Brass has enjoyed a flurry of recording and performance activity, releasing five CDs, including Bach's *The Art of Fugue* on the Four Winds label.

As an educator, Mr. Vosburgh has appeared in universities across Europe, Asia, and the United States, including Northwestern University, University of Michigan, UCLA, and Tokyo Music Academy, as well as the Tanglewood Fellowship program. He has lectured at the International Trumpet Guild's annual conference and recently published a critical edition of the Böhme Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra in E minor published by Vosburgh Music Inc. He is currently on the faculty of Duquesne University and Carnegie Mellon University.

Mr. Vosburgh is a graduate of the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, where he was Principal Trumpet and featured soloist with the famed Eastman Wind Ensemble. He began his career as an orchestral trumpeter at age 19 as third trumpet and assistant principal of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of David Zinman. After three years with the Rochester Philharmonic, he joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Sir Georg Solti as the youngest member of the orchestra's world-famous brass section.

Until 2018, George Vosburgh held the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Martha Brooks Robinson Chair.